DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 585 CS 006 717

AUTHOR Cox, Beverly; Sulzby, Elizabeth
TITLE Evidence of Planning in Dialogue and Monologue by Five-Year-Old Emergent Readers.
PUB DATE Dec 81
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference (31st, Dallas, TX, December 2-5, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Child Development; *Cognitive Processes; *Developmental Stages; *Early Reading; *Inner Speech (Subvocal); Kindergarten Children; *Language Acquisition; *Language Usage; Preschool Education; Reading Ability; Reading Readiness; Story Telling
IDENTIFIERS *Conversation

ABSTRACT

A study investigated the linguistic development of three kindergarten children judged to be high, moderate, or low in emergent reading ability. Specifically, the study examined whether a developmental direction from dialogue to monologue exists in the children and whether a characteristic of thought termed "inner speech" underlies each discourse mode. The children were recorded on a number of occasions during a school year as they engaged in conversation (dialogue) and told stories (monologue). Transcripts of these recordings were then coded for dialogue and monologue effectiveness and for characteristics of inner speech. Results showed that for the high and low emergent reading ability children, dialogue competence preceded monologue competence, which was not the case for the moderate reading ability child. In addition, the high and low reading ability children employed more inner speech than did the moderate ability child. The findings suggest that examining the dialogue and monologue performances of prereading children can provide valuable information about emergent reading ability. They also show that for some children, intrusions of inner speech are important signs of the degree of internalized speech forms. (FL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED218585

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Elizabeth Sulzby, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Education
Northwestern University
2003 Sheridan Rd.
Evanston, IL., 60201

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Beverly Cox
Elizabeth Sulzby
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Evidence of Planning in Dialogue and Monologue by Five-Year-Old Emergent Readers[1]

Beverly Cox
Northwestern University

Elizabeth Sulzby[2]
Northwestern University

The purpose of this paper is to explore one facet of the linguistic development of three kindergarten children judged to be high, moderate, or low in emergent reading ability. The paper is part of a project in early literacy called "Beginning Readers' Developing Knowledges About Written Language." The goal of the project is to provide a theoretically-based description of the transition from pre-reading to reading. The description includes many facets of the child's knowledges about oral and written language, including conversation, storytelling, dictation, writing, re-reading and editing.

CS006717

In this paper, we describe some instances of conversation and storytelling. These instances differ along dimensions related to the distinction between dialogue and monologue. We propose that the ability to distinguish between the language modes of dialogue and monologue is one indication of the child's readiness for independent reading. We further suggest that a characteristic of thought which Vygotsky (1962) called inner speech underlies both dialogue and monologue and often intrudes into these forms, particularly for young children.

Conversation is a form of dialogue, or speech with others, in which the responsibility for the total speech event is shared between partners. Blank (1973), Bruner (1975), Cherry (1980), and Wertsch (1979) have demonstrated that the ability to carry the burden within conversation is gradually assumed by the child through interaction with an adult, usually the mother. Wertsch suggests that the adult becomes the metacognitive guide for the child; his research can be interpreted to indicate that the mother models thinking through dialogue with the child and that the child gradually becomes able to think internally using the steps which the mother has modelled. The adult's linguistic cues serve the same planning function for the child that inner speech will serve once the child internalizes these planning cues.

In contrast to dialogue, monologue can be considered to be speech for others. Monologue can be oral or written. In either case, the composer needs to make a communication clear to either an absent or a non-interactive audience. Sulzby (1980) has suggested that both reader and

writer need a model of the author-reader relationship and that the ability to sustain a monologue furnishes evidence of how this model is developing. Johnson (1977) proposed that the ability to sustain an oral monologue is associated with readiness for reading. Sulzby (1981b) has found that children who show less emergent reading ability tend to modify speech situations requiring monologue toward interactive, conversational speech. Dowley (1980) has investigated kindergarten children's ability to retell long stories. She studied the social interaction between teacher and children in which the teacher asks questions and provides prompts which the child seems to internalize and use to guide independent retelling. Thus she proposes that monologic retelling develops from dialogic exchanges.

Vygotsky (1962, 1978) suggested that thinking and language develop first on the interpsychological plane, or between two persons such as mother and child. As described in the discussion of dialogue, he proposes that such interpsychological functioning becomes internalized and becomes inner speech. Inner speech becomes a form of and tool of thought as an intrapsychological process as well as a means of turning thought into an externalized form which can be understood by another person. Oral monologues, such as storytelling incidents, and written texts are examples of externalized forms in which the composer needs to furnish the cues internally.

To verify that a developmental direction from dialogue to monologue exists, we would have to be able to access and examine inner

speech to compare it with externalized speech, both in its supported, dialogic form and in its independent, monologic form. One tool used to estimate the difference between externalized speech and inner speech is to ask subjects to think aloud while performing tasks such as playing chess or solving the Tower of Hanoi puzzle. This technique has been used with language composing tasks such as writing (Flower & Hayes, 1979). Flower (1979) has turned the thinking-aloud protocols of adult writers into tools for analyzing aspects of inner speech that intrude into demanding language composition tasks.

The term inner speech as it was used by Vygotsky and as we are using it needs further clarification. It refers not only to the covert cognitive machinations that we typically call thinking. It also includes all uses of speech to facilitate thinking and planning. We often excuse such speech: "Sorry, just thinking out loud." Inner speech, according to Vygotsky, is both natural and vital to cognitive and linguistic growth. The purposes it attains are refinement, practice, and learning of control through feedback from others. When externalized, inner speech requires significant translation in order to achieve a communicative function effectively. Inner speech's inherent characteristics include form and function. In form, it is abbreviated and highly contextualized; its function is planning rather than communication.

Much speech of young children shows characteristics of inner speech. Examples in our protocols include incidents of labelling; speech that accompanies action; comments about on-going scenes and

events; and conversational turn-taking in which the adult serves as the metacognitive guide. In addition, there are times when the child clearly signals planning before and during composition. In this paper, however, we focus upon formally structured tasks requiring conversation and storytelling.

Examination of differences between storytelling and story dictation in relation to children's judged emergent reading ability (Sulzby, 1981b) indicates that less mature language forms can intrude into tasks requiring more mature forms and that such intrusions are related to the linguistic maturity of the child in relation to the task. The more mature child (1) can make clearer distinctions between linguistic modes and tasks; (2) can make these distinctions more voluntarily; and (3) can make the distinctions upon request. In contrast, the less mature child (1) makes distinctions that are less clear; (2) rarely makes these distinctions voluntarily; and (3) upon request has little success without continued aid. Sulzby has suggested that the aid which such children elicit tends to modify the linguistic situation, such as modication of the mode of storytelling toward conversation. More mature children, on the other hand, tend to modify modes toward more autonomous forms. Such modifications may also include the intrusion of characteristics of inner speech; we would expect more instances of inner speech to intrude in monologue for mature children and more in dialogue for less mature children.

In this study, two modes, conversation and storytelling, were examined for the child's effectiveness in maintaining the dialogic and monologic forms. Additionally, linguistic samples of each form were analyzed for intrusions of inner speech. Both effectiveness and characteristics of inner speech were compared with the individual development of the child being studied. Specifically, these questions were addressed descriptively: (1) How well can the child perform as an equal participant in conversation, a dialogic mode? (2) How well can the child produce autonomous text, or monologue that is an uninterrupted cohesive whole that does not require questions from its intended audience? (3) What is the nature of inner speech intrusions in dialogue and monologue?

Method

Subjects

The subjects were three kindergarten children from among nine chosen for case studies of beginning reading and writing. The children were chosen from 24 kindergarten children in the same classroom in a suburb north of Chicago, Illinois. The children were chosen on the basis of the first of a series of five studies and on teacher judgment. The children were given code names; those names along with emergent reading classification, age as of December, 1980, and sex are given for reader convenience:

Name:	Emergent Reading Ability:	Age:	Sex:
Betsy	High	5-9	Female
Andrea	Moderate	5-7	Female
Mike	Low	5-8	Male

Date Source

The data source for this paper consists of transcripts from five studies that extended across the school year for 1980-81. Studies I and V were beginning and end of the year interviews called, "General Knowledges About Written Language," conducted with 24 children. Studies II, III, and IV were mini-experiments with nine case study children in which children were asked to compose stories and do other related tasks such as storytelling, dictation, writing, re-reading and editing. Additionally, instances of conversation and interrogation were built into the structures of all five studies.

Transcripts were made from tape recorded sessions and were checked by at least two persons. The protocols included many instances of both dialogue and monologue. The first author was the examiner responsible for the three children reported on herein; she selected 92 samples from the transcripts which she judged to be typical instances of each child's dialogue and monologue attempts. From the candidate samples, the two authors selected subsets to be used in the analyses that follow.

Analysis

Dialogue and monologue effectiveness. Five sets of samples were presented to two independent judges for ranking according to how effective the child was in the language mode, either as participating in dialogue or as maintaining monologue. The five sets consisted of three dialogues and two monologues, with each set containing one sample from each child. Two dialogue sets came from Study I in November, one adult-initiated and the other child-initiated. The third dialogue set came from Study III in March. The two monologue samples came from Study II (January and February) and from Study IV (April and May).

The two judges differed in linguistic training and directions for the effectiveness judgments were devised to suit their training. To determine whether "effectiveness" could be judged by a naive person acquainted with children, we asked a naive judge simply to take each set and to rank it according to how effective the child was in maintaining either dialogue or monologue, respectively. After ranking, she was asked to describe the basis she used in making the decisions. These bases were then compared with those formulated for our experienced judge and were found to be compatible.

The experienced judge was given the following criteria for the two modes of speech. Effective dialogue was ranked according to effective turn-taking which entailed the child's recognizing and employing cues to maintain comprehensibility for the other participant and also taking mutual responsibility for the maintenance of the conversation.

The child would be effective if s/he gave necessary specification of referents and communicated in an understandable sequence. The child would not be effective if the adult had to interrogate the child to get needed information or otherwise had to bear most of the burden of maintaining dialogue. Effective monologue was defined as composing a unit which could be understood without external intervention such as questions and that maintained a level of decontextualization that was appropriate for the monologue mode. Both judges, however, simply ranked three samples against each other on an effectiveness basis. The two judges agreed for 13 of 15 rankings (87% agreement); since the authors agreed with the experienced judge, her rankings were used in Table 1.

Characteristics of inner speech. Two judges, the experienced judge above and the first author, reviewed all samples used in the effectiveness rankings and selected all instances within the samples which could be considered to be intrusions of inner speech. Samples fell into two classes based upon judged function. These classes were coded separately as "Planning" (P) or as "Unloading" (U). "Planning" examples showed a clear relationship to intended or eventual goals; "Unloading" examples seemed to report cognitive processing, yet appeared to be only peripherally or generally related to the intended goal. These statements seemed to require the listener to make extensive inferences in order to connect the "Unloading" speech to the goal.

Individual and developmental description. Case studies for each of the three children were based upon the five studies described above,

classroom observations, and interviews with parents and teacher. Comments utilizing case study information are woven into the results and discussion section. One conclusion from the case studies that is relevant is that the three children maintained their relative overall standing in emergent reading abilities.

Results

Dialogue and monologue effectiveness. Table 1 shows the effectiveness rankings for the dialogue and monologue samples compared with the same child's rankings on emergent reading ability. The child ranked most ready to read (Betsy) performed at a steady level in both dialogue and monologue. In contrast, Andrea and Mike exhibited differential competencies. Mike was ranked slightly more competent in dialogue than was Andrea and both were considered to be considerably less competent than Betsy. However, in the monologue mode Mike clearly was ranked last. On the other hand, Andrea's and Betsy's performance in monologue appear to be equivalent over time.

Insert Table 1 about here

Characteristics of inner speech. The frequency of inner speech examples across modes as shown in Table 2 clearly varies by child. Thirty-two instances were agreed upon by the raters. The table shows that the quantity of inner speech instances did not seem to be directly related to judged reading readiness. These instances, however, are not corrected for total amount produced by each child. Both Mike and Betsy

had large numbers of instances: 11 and 17, respectively. However, Mike employed a roughly equal number of inner speech instances in both monologue and dialogue, while Betsy used inner speech far more frequently in the monologue mode. A review of the total protocols from which the samples were drawn revealed that Mike relied more upon dialogue with the examiner in order to produce the sample labelled monologue while Betsy used inner speech in the monologue itself. In other words, Mike had the inner speech function accomplished for him by the examiner and Betsy produced her own.

Insert Table 2 about here

A closer inspection of the function of the inner speech instances suggested two different categories, planning and what we have called unloading. Of the 17 instances of inner speech employed by Betsy, for example, all but one clearly showed effective use and control of the planning function. While Andrea used only four instances of inner speech, three of the four served planning adequately. In Mike's case, however, of the 11 inner speech instances, at least four and perhaps five were judged not to serve planning identifiably. Instead, they seemed more like an "unloading" of thoughts, almost a "stream of consciousness" that seemed to serve planning only minimally; they did not seem to serve Mike to advance communication. Thus, while the amount of inner speech did not seem to be directly related to emergent reading ability, the two types of inner speech instances suggested that Betsy's were more mature.

The proportion of instances of inner speech that served planning and unloading functions were compared. Betsy, the "high" child, produced 94% planning and 6% unloading instances. Andrea's four examples were 75% planning and 25% unloading, while Mike employed 64% planning to 35% unloading instances.

Discussion

It should be recalled that this paper only reviews data from a small sample of children at a specific site and the methodology and analyses used in this paper are exploratory. Therefore, the results are only suggestive. These suggestions can be compared with other theoretical and empirical sources investigating the various roles of dialogue and monologue with young children (Bernstein, 1975; Blank, 1973; Bruner, 1975; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Wells, 1981).

The results of the effectiveness rankings indicate that both naive and experienced linguistic judges can evaluate the abilities of children to maintain the demands of dialogue and monologue when given typed transcripts of these samples. Experienced judges were also able to agree about instances in which inner speech intruded into each mode.

Generally, Mike's and Betsy's relative standings would support the claim that dialogue competence precedes monologue competence. Differences in the modes into which inner speech intruded for Mike and Betsy also supported the dialogue before monologue expectation. Andrea's results in both rankings and inner speech intrusions do not support this conclusion.

With a sample of three, it is difficult to make claims about the nature of the results. The total case studies for these three children would support the argument that Betsy and Mike fit the dialogue-monologue distinction argument. Andrea has been an unusual, "shy" child throughout the study. She could, but rarely did take active, elaborated part in conversation (cf. Wells, 1981) but she could gain attention and aid in turn-taking activities. On the other hand, she could maintain monologue and her written compositions were quite advanced although not as independent as Betsy's. In Cox's case studies of these three children, she is exploring broader issues of dialogic and monologic behavior, particularly trying to understand Andrea's development.

Differences between the quantity and the kind of inner speech intrusions were examined. In quantity, inner speech was employed significantly more (28 of 32 instances) by Betsy and Mike. At the end of the year, both children had exhibited slow but steady upward growth in dialogue/monologue skills even though their growth was from different starting points. Andrea's samples were too few to judge.

Two kinds of inner speech were found, "planning" and "unloading." It should be recalled that the nature of inner speech, according to Vygotsky, is to serve planning, to implement thinking through speaking, at first overtly in dialogue in which someone else carries much of the burden and later covertly as internalized inner speech helps one externalize speech for and with others. In relation to the hypothesized dialogue-monologue order, it was interesting to note that the examples

called "unloading" occurred only in dialogue. However, the dialogue mode imposes greater restrictions upon the appropriateness of responses but it also offers greater support. The interactive nature of dialogue may mask instances of inner speech as planning or, alternatively, may make such instances less necessary. On the other hand, unloadings, as we have called them, appear to represent cognitive and linguistic processing that is not yet mature enough to be under the direct control of the speaker and not communicative enough to be aided by the adult conversational partner's attempts.

We have speculated that the amount of control over the functional aspect of inner speech may indeed be related to greater reading readiness. For example, Mike who is still at a very early level of emergent reading ability used four times as many instances of inner speech that were classified as "unloadings," or that did not serve the situational demands for planning. In contrast, Andrea and Betsy, who exhibited more mature emergent reading abilities, both employed only one example of inner speech that was not planning. Mike often complained to the first author of having ideas in his head that he was trying to get out, as if control of his thoughts was not yet attainable. The two girls seemed to have a great deal of control. Betsy could even explain to an examiner why her wording in a dictation was more precise than other, alternate wordings.

In spite of Andrea's performance, there seems to be some support in the data for the Vygotskyian notion that the planning function of

inner speech develops in dialogue between individuals. Particular evidence for this interpretation was provided by Mike's productions in the monologue mode. In monologue, Mike frequently employed inner speech only after it was modelled by the examiner through dialogue that served as metacognitive guidance.

In one such instance, Mike was asked to tell a make-believe story about Little Prince Charming learning to ride a big wheel. In contrast to other children who could compose such a story rather easily, Mike could contribute story elements only in response to adult interrogations such as, "Where was he?" "Who was with him?" When asked to retell the story himself, Mike again managed to elicit cues from the adult. A few minutes later, when asked to dictate the story, Mike inserted one, possibly two, of the adult's planning cues into his dictation. These cues are underlined below:

He did it on Mars.

And where it happened.

And rode one.

Typically, without such dialogic exchange, in the early sessions of the study Mike would make no monologue attempts. This is consistent with a scale for judging emergent reading abilities of children composing and reading from dictated and handwritten stories developed by Sulzby (1981c). As Mike learned more, by late spring, he began to question whether these planning insertions, such as "and where it happened," were actually part of his story. The inference we draw is that Mike

was employing dialogically-imparted planning structures from the adult for a process that he had not yet internalized. As a result, he did not distinguish them from his own content nor use them independently as covert inner speech guiding his composition nor insert them in changed form into his dictation.

In summary, the authors suggest that examination of dialogue and monologue performance by pre-reading children is possible and is potentially informative about children's emergent reading abilities. The findings suggest that for some children intrusions of inner speech are important signs of the degree of internalized speech forms. These findings are only exploratory and must be combined with other indicators of emerging literacy.

References

Bernstein, B. Class, codes, and control. Vol. I. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

Blank, M. Teaching learning in the preschool: A dialogue approach. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1973.

Bruner, J. S. Language as an instrument of thought. In A. Davies (Ed.), Problems of language and learning. London: Heinemann, 1975.

Cherry, L. J. The role of adults' requests for clarification in the language development of children. In R. O. Freedle (Ed.), New directions in discourse processing. Vol. II. Norwood, N. J.: Ablex Publishing Company, 1979.

Dowley, G. The social origins of narrative skills. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1980.

Flower, L. Writer-based prose: A cognitive basis for problems in writing. College English, 1979, 41, 19-37.

Flower, L., & Hayes, R. J. Problem-solving strategies and the writing process. College English, 1977, 39, 449-461.

Johnson, T. Language experience: We can't all write what we can say. The Reading Teacher, 1977, 30, 297-299.

Sulzby, E. Beginning readers' developing knowledges about written language. Proposal to the National Institute of Education. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1980.

Sulzby, E. Kindergarteners begin to read their own compositions: Beginning readers' developing knowledges about written language project.

Final report to the Research Foundation of the National Council of Teachers of English. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1981. (a)

Sulzby, E. When kindergarteners read and write: Told and dictated story characteristics. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Los Angeles, April 1981. (Submitted for publication). (b)

Vygotsky, L. S. Thought and language. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1962.

Vygotsky, L. S. Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Wells, G. Learning through interaction: The study of language development. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Wertsch, J. V. From social interaction to higher psychological processes: A clarification and application of Vygotsky's theory. Human Development, 1979, 22, 1-22.

Footnotes

[1]We would like to thank the children and teacher in this study who must remain anonymous. Additionally, we thank June Barnhart, Clifford Cox, Paula Olszewski, and, particularly, Beverly Otto, for their help in scoring, data analysis, and reacting to the paper.

[2]The research reported in this paper was supported in part by a grant from the National Institute of Education, NIE-G-80-0176, to the second author. The statements made herein are solely the responsibility of the authors.

Table 1

Rankings of Dialogue and Monologue Samples Compared

With Emergent Reading Ability

Child	Emergent Reading Ability Rank	Dialogue Ranks				Monologue Ranks		
		Fall 1	Fall 2	Spring	Median	Winter	Spring	Median
Mike	3[a]	2	3	2	2	3	3	3
Andrea	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	1.5
Betsy	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.5

[a]3 equals the ranking of least ability.

Table 2

Frequency Data:

Inner Speech Instances in Dialogue and Monologue Samples

	Emergent Reading Rank	Dialogue			Monologue		Totals
		Fall(1)	Fall(2)	Spring	Winter	Spring	
Mike	Low	3	2	1	3	2	11
Andrea	Moderate	1	0	1	1	1	4
Betsy	High	0	3	3	7	4	17